

## § 2001.13

it has been properly exempted under section 3.3 of the Order.

(f) *Foreign government information.* The declassifying agency is the agency that initially received or classified the information. When foreign government information is being considered for declassification or appears to be subject to automatic declassification, the declassifying agency shall determine whether the information is subject to a treaty or international agreement that would prevent its declassification at that time. Depending on the age of the information and whether it is contained in permanently valuable records, the declassifying agency shall also determine if another exemption under section 3.3 (b) of the Order, such as the exemption that pertains to United States foreign relations, may apply to the information. If the declassifying agency believes such an exemption may apply, it should consult with any other concerned agencies in making its declassification determination. The declassifying agency or the Department of State, as appropriate, may consult with the foreign government(s) prior to declassification.

(g) *Determining when information is subject to automatic declassification.* The “date of the information’s origin” or “the information’s origin,” as used in the Order and this part, pertains to the date that specific information, which is contemporaneously or subsequently classified, is first recorded in an agency’s records, or in presidential historical materials, presidential records or donated historical materials. The following examples illustrate this process:

*Example 1.* An agency first issues a classification guide on the F-99 aircraft on October 20, 1995. The guide states that the fact that the F-99 aircraft has a maximum velocity of 500 m.p.h. shall be classified at the “Secret” level for a period of ten years. A document dated July 10, 1999, is classified because it includes the maximum velocity of the F-99. The document should be marked for declassification on October 20, 2005, ten years after the specific information was first recorded in the guide, not on July 10, 2009, ten years after the derivatively classified document was created.

*Example 2.* An agency classification guide issued on October 20, 1995, states that the maximum velocity of any fighter aircraft shall be classified at the “Secret” level for a period of ten years. The agency first records

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the specific maximum velocity of the new F-88 aircraft on July 10, 1999. The document should be marked for declassification on July 10, 2009, ten years after the specific information is first recorded, and not on October 20, 2005, ten years after the date of the guide’s generic instruction. Subsequent documents containing this information would be marked for declassification 10 years from the date of the document.

### § 2001.13 Classification prohibitions and limitations [1.7].

(a) In making the decision to reclassify information that has been declassified and released to the public under proper authority, the agency head or deputy agency head must determine in writing that reclassification of the information is necessary in the interest of the national security.

(1) In addition, the agency must deem the information to be reasonably recoverable which means that:

(i) Most individual recipients or holders are known and can be contacted and all forms of the information to be reclassified can be retrieved from them and

(ii) If the information has been made available to the public via means such as Government archives or reading rooms, it is withdrawn from public access.

(2) The declassification and release of information under proper authority means that the agency originating the information authorized the declassification and release of the information.

(b) Once the reclassification action has occurred, it must be reported to ISOO within 30 days. The notification must include how the “reasonably recoverable” decision was made, including the number of recipients or holders, how the information was retrieved and how the recipients or holders were briefed.

(c) Any recipients or holders of the reclassified information who have current security clearances shall be appropriately briefed about their continuing legal obligations and responsibilities to protect this information from unauthorized disclosure. The recipients or holders who do not have security clearances shall, to the extent practicable, be appropriately briefed about the reclassification of the information that

they have had access to, their obligation not to disclose the information, and be requested to sign an acknowledgement of this briefing.

(d) The reclassified information must be appropriately marked and safeguarded. The markings should include the reclassification authority and the date of the action. Apply other markings as provided in subpart B of this part.

#### **§ 2001.14 Classification challenges [1.8].**

(a) *Challenging classification.* Authorized holders wishing to challenge the classification status of information shall present such challenges to an original classification authority with jurisdiction over the information. An authorized holder is any individual, including an individual external to the agency, who has been granted access to specific classified information in accordance with the provisions of the Order to include the special conditions set forth in section 4.1(h) of the Order. A formal challenge under this provision must be in writing, but need not be any more specific than to question why information is or is not classified, or is classified at a certain level.

(b) *Agency procedures.* (1) Because the Order encourages authorized holders to challenge classification as a means for promoting proper and thoughtful classification actions, agencies shall ensure that no retribution is taken against any authorized holders bringing such a challenge in good faith.

(2) Agencies shall establish a system for processing, tracking and recording formal classification challenges made by authorized holders. Agencies shall consider classification challenges separately from Freedom of Information Act or other access requests, and shall not process such challenges in turn with pending access requests.

(3) The agency shall provide an initial written response to a challenge within 60 days. If the agency is unable to respond to the challenge within 60 days, the agency must acknowledge the challenge in writing, and provide a date by which the agency will respond. The acknowledgment must include a statement that if no agency response is received within 120 days, the challenger

has the right to forward the challenge to the Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel (ISCAP) for a decision. The challenger may also forward the challenge to the ISCAP if an agency has not responded to an internal appeal within 90 days of the agency's receipt of the appeal. Agency responses to those challenges it denies shall include the challenger's appeal rights to the ISCAP.

(4) Whenever an agency receives a classification challenge to information that has been the subject of a challenge within the past two years, or that is the subject of pending litigation, the agency is not required to process the challenge beyond informing the challenger of this fact and of the challenger's appeal rights, if any.

(c) *Additional considerations.* (1) Challengers and agencies shall attempt to keep all challenges, appeals and responses unclassified. However, classified information contained in a challenge, an agency response, or an appeal shall be handled and protected in accordance with the Order and its implementing directives. Information being challenged for classification shall remain classified unless and until a final decision is made to declassify it.

(2) The classification challenge provision is not intended to prevent an authorized holder from informally questioning the classification status of particular information. Such informal inquiries should be encouraged as a means of holding down the number of formal challenges.

#### **§ 2001.15 Classification guides [2.2].**

(a) *Preparation of classification guides.* Originators of classification guides are encouraged to consult users of guides for input when developing or updating guides. When possible, originators of classification guides are encouraged to communicate within their agencies and with other agencies that are developing guidelines for similar activities to ensure the consistency and uniformity of classification decisions. Each agency shall maintain a list of its classification guides in use.

(b) *General content of classification guides.* Classification guides shall, at a minimum: